



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES DIVISION

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

With very high temperatures forecast throughout San Luis Obispo County over the upcoming days, Animal Services is encouraging all pet owners to take precautions to ensure their animals are protected from temperature extremes.

- Leave pets at home when you go out. Even with windows partially opened, the interior temperature of your car can quickly rise above 105F. Such temperatures can lead to heat prostration (overheating) and can be fatal. Parking in the shade offers little protection, as the sun shifts positions and an animal's panting can help raise the internal temperature and humidity of your car.
- Try to keep pets in cool, well ventilated areas of your house. If animals must be outside, ensure that they are provided with plenty of shade.
- Ensure pets have free access to fresh, clean water at all times.
- Exercise pets in the early morning or evening; let them rest during the warmer mid-day hours. Don't exercise pets immediately following meals.
- Don't walk or leave pets standing on asphalt. The hot surface can cause burns to their sensitive paw pads and can contribute to overheating.
- Keep pets well groomed. Shaving heavy coated dogs to a hair length of about one inch will help prevent overheating. Don't shave down to the skin, however, as this can lead to sunburns. Clipping hair from the face and feet can also help reduce the risk of problems related to foxtails and burrs. Brushing cats will help keep them cooler by removing old, loose hair.
- Be particularly attentive to the needs of those pets which are most susceptible to heat related problems. Such animals include old and overweight pets; brachycephalic or 'snub-nose' dogs like Boston terriers, Lhasa apsos, shih tzus, pugs, and bulldogs; pets with health problems, particularly heart and lung disorders. Additionally, rabbits are particularly sensitive to heat stress.
- Learn to recognize the signs of overheating: heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid pulse, unsteadiness or staggering, vomiting, and deep red or purple mucus membranes or tongue. If heat stress is observed, help lower body temperature by applying cool (but not cold) water over the body and by giving them small amounts of water or ice cubes. Saturating the feet pads, groin, and axilla ('armpit') with rubbing alcohol is very effective at helping to reduce body temperature. Most importantly, a veterinarian should be contacted immediately if overheating is observed.

Media Inquiries should be directed to Animal Services Manager Eric Anderson, (805)781-4409.